

Magazines

New Look Einstein and The Turin Shroud Test

By Tom Zito

The new Look, a weekly, looks like the old Life (in its new form, a monthly). And while Life is already on the stands at \$1.50 a copy, Look won't be available until January, at \$1 a copy.

But just to show advertisers what's in store for them, Look this week published a pilot issue, under the guidance of new publisher Daniel Filipacchi, owner of Paris Match. Ignore the copy in every story ("this is dummy text. Eleven on twelve Baskerville set to a length of 15 picas. . .") and you get a good idea of what the magazine will be like: a melange of the old news edge of Life and the semi-sensationalistic tenor of Us.

A gas truck explosion in Spain is documented with grisly shots of charred corpses; a piece on the new TV season is fleshed out with plenty of bosomy publicity photos and Princess Caroline's honeymoon is record with intimate images.

On the plus side, there are some spectacular photos of Double Eagle II over France, the promise of some serious political reporting (again "this is dummy text. . .") and some enticing features on women in the Marines and medical innovations.

It's a rare issue of Science that delivers a satirical belly laugh, what with articles like "genetically determined sex reversals in four, six, xv humans." Even when an offbeat topic is approached—as in July's analysis of the Shroud of Turin, a cloth some believe to have wrapped the dead body of Christ—the tenor is coolly scientific.

Barbara Culliton's scholarly description of the astoundingly intricate tests scheduled to be performed on the shroud this fall touched off a substantial amount of mail, including a rather detailed declaration of belief printed in the Sept. 1 issue from a trio of researchers at the University of California at Davis, who postulated a seemingly plausible "mechanism by which an image of a body might have been

formed on cloth in which it was wrapped." P. Ziller, P. Purcel and M. Cul knew quite a bit about bodies wrapped in shrouds, particularly this body. No wonder. The authors of the letter are three characters from Tom Robbins' first novel, "Another Roadside Attraction"—the attraction in question being the actual body of Christ smuggled out of the catacombs where centuries of popes had hidden it away.

"This sort of thing doesn't happen here very much," said Science managing editor Robert Ormes, who was quick to add that the scholarly board of editors does not really consider this too much bonded protein (egg) on the tie.

"We write about so many kinds of topics that this sort of thing is bound to happen every now and then," he said.

With all the bravura of a leaky faucet, the German publishing company Gruner and Jahr has released the premiere issue of Geo, Deutschland's version of National Geographic.

While the foreign edition is a hot little number, the domestic version has a lot to learn before it can challenge N.G., whose circulation of 10 million puts it behind only TV Guide (20 million) and Reader's Digest (18 million) as America's most loved magazine.

While Geo's 8-x-11 format offers design possibilities unavailable to the smaller N.G., the layout of the first issue is helter-skelter and the color printing often muddied. There's one spectacular aerial photo essay on the birth of an ocean, and the quality of the writing tends to be a notch more popularist than N.G.'s buttoned-down, Oxford prose, but on its one chance to shine—an essay on Los Angeles—Geo falls right in the trap of the old plastic hot dog clichés.

Pornography this year will do about \$4 billion in business, as much as the conventional motion picture and rec-

ord industries combined. In Los Angeles alone sex shops will sell more than \$125 million in goods, about three times the amount of that town's J. Magnin.

The real money in the porn racket, according to Forbes magazine, which analyzed the business in its Sept. 18 issue, is in 25-cents-a-peep skin-flick Nickelodeans in book shops. The loser: paperback erotica, because the quirky nature of publishing crosses over even into pornography. Forbes says there are millions to be made in the ever-expanding field. Where? Ruben Sturman, whom Forbes has christened the No. 1 sex merchant in the United States with 800 retail stores and a national distribution network for films, books and marital aids, thinks the answer is simple. "The future," he says, "is in audio visual tape."

Negative reviews usually get read far less than positive ones because they tend to dismiss their subject early in the analysis.

Even the best reviews can sometimes mask a turkey by writing some general introduction and then using the standard transition, "Unfortunately, Fairfax tensch wasn't able to infuse this latest work with such a vision . . ."

Susan Sontag, who can write rings around a moving snake, proffers some provoking insights into fashion photography in the September Vogue—particularly interesting because, in effect, the piece is a subtle putdown of Richard Avedon's fashion photos just hung at the Met. It is not until the last paragraph of her fascinating essay that Sontag reveals that she finds the images dated and mannered.

"Fashion photography," she notes in the process of coming to her well-served judgment, "is the record of fashions but it is not about fashions. It is about appearances that fascinate. More and more fashion is fashion photography."

Albert Einstein relaxed by sailboat

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